

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 21-25, and 38 remain in this application with claims 1, 21, and 38 in independent form. Claims 1, 6-8, 21, and 38 have been amended. Claims 9-20, 26-37, and 39-40 have been previously cancelled.

Applicant submits herewith a request for continued examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.114 and a petition for a one-month extension of time in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a).

Claims 1-8, 21-25, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Crawford (United States Patent Application Publication 2003/0017868 A1) in view of Kaplan (United States Patent No. 5,413,342).

Crawford discloses a slot machine that has increased multiple pay-lines. The increase in pay-lines is achieved by utilizing a matrix of five rows and five columns. The pay-line patterns may include rows, columns, semi-diagonal, and displaced lines. Kaplan discloses a slot machine that includes stationary mounted rotating drums for horizontally rotating a plurality of symbols.

Independent claims 1, 21, and 38 have been amended to more clearly define the novelty of the subject application. Claim 1 is directed toward a video slot gaming machine for playing by a player. The video slot gaming machine comprises a housing, a memory device, and a game controller. The housing has a display device for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells. The plurality of cells represents a plurality of horizontal reels. The memory device stores a pay-table and the game controller is coupled to the display device and the memory device for randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device. The memory device also determines an

outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined vertical pay-lines, and a wager made by the player. The game elements comprise a first, second, and third portions corresponding to a first character. When the first, second, and third portions are vertically aligned in the vertical pay-line, the game elements aggregate into the first character.

Claim 21 is directed toward a method for playing a video slot game by a player. The method comprises the steps of storing a pay-table, displaying a plurality of game elements comprising a head, a torso with arms, and legs corresponding to a first character in a grid having a plurality of cells representing horizontal reels, and randomly selecting the game elements to be displayed in the display device. An outcome is determined based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined vertical pay-lines, and a wager made by the player. The head, torso with arms, and legs are aggregated into the first character when the game elements are vertically aligned in the vertical pay-line.

Claim 38 is directed toward a computer program product for playing a video game. The computer program product comprises a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied in the medium for storing a pay-table and for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells representing horizontal reels. The game elements comprise a head, a torso with arms, and legs corresponding to a first character. The computer readable program code means further randomly selects the game elements to be displayed in the display device and determines an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, predetermined vertical pay-lines, and a wager made by the player. The computer readable program code means also aggregates the head, torso with arms, and legs into the first character when the game elements are vertically aligned in the vertical pay-line.

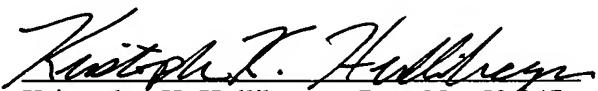
Applicant: Savio et al.
Serial No.: 10/082,540
Group Art Unit: 3713

Crawford and/or Kaplan does not disclose, teach, or suggest first, second, and third portions aggregated into a first character when the first, second, and third portions are vertically aligned in a vertical pay-line. Further, it is believed that none of the cited references disclose, teach, or suggest such a limitation. Since none of the cited prior art disclose, teach, or suggest, these limitations, independent claims 1, 21, and 38 are believed to be allowable. Claims 2-8 and 22-25, which depend directly or indirectly from claims 1 and 21, are also believed to be allowable.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Application, as amended, is now presented in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. Applicant believes that no fees are due, however, if any become required, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account 08-2789.

Respectfully submitted,
HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS, P.C.

March 15, 2005
Date


Kristopher K. Hullberger, Reg. No. 53,047
The Pinehurst Office Center, Suite #101
39400 Woodward Avenue
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304
(248) 645-1483

Applicant: Savio et al.
Serial No.: 10/082,540
Group Art Unit: 3713

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this Amendment for United States Patent Application Serial Number 10/082,540 filed March 1, 2002 is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on March 15, 2005.

Melissa Dadisman

Melissa Dadisman

G:\U-L\Konami\Ip00012 - Sticks Continuation\Patent\RCE Amendment.doc